

years, both rebels and paramilitaries have financed their illegal activities through the sale of cocaine, which has also corrupted government institutions.

Each year since the inception of Plan Colombia, the United States has provided Colombia with more than half a billion dollars in mostly military and counter-drug assistance, totaling more than \$5 billion.

The primary goal of Plan Colombia, at least as sold to the Congress, was to decrease by half the amount of coca produced, resulting in commensurate reductions in the income derived from cocaine to the rebels and paramilitaries and the amount of cocaine entering the United States.

While there is no reliable evidence that Plan Colombia has affected either the price or availability of cocaine in the United States, the Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that profits from illegal drugs to the FARC rebels declined by about one-third between 2003 and 2005. This is welcome news. But whether this trend has continued since then or has ebbed and flowed like most other statistics relating to drug cultivation and trafficking in Colombia, is unknown. Unfortunately, it is also not yet apparent that this reported reduction in profits has affected the FARC's ability to operate.

While the majority of killings of civilians during the 7 years of Plan Colombia are attributed to paramilitaries, sometimes with the active or tacit support of government forces, the FARC has engaged in many atrocities, including attacks against civilian targets and kidnapping. But perhaps the most insidious of their crimes is the widespread use of landmines.

According to a report released yesterday by Human Rights Watch, casualties from landmines used by the FARC, as well as by another rebel group known as the ELN, have risen steadily in recent years. As is so often the case with landmines which are triggered indiscriminately by the victim, most of the casualties in Colombia have been civilians.

While the number of casualties did not exceed 148 a year in the 1990s, Human Rights Watch reports that last year the number was 1,107. This increase contrasts sharply with the worldwide decline in the use of these insidious weapons. In fact, Colombia is among the more than 150 nations that have signed or ratified the international treaty banning antipersonnel mines.

According to press reports, the FARC defends its use of mines by claiming that they are used only against government security forces, not civilians. That, however, is a specious claim, since mines are inherently indiscriminate. They will kill or maim whoever comes into contact with them, often months or years after they are laid. I have seen photographs of the horrific injuries suffered by both government

soldiers and innocent civilians from rebel mines.

While the FARC, like others who continue to use landmines, would undoubtedly claim that their military utility justifies their continued use, I reject that argument. The harm to civilians and the contamination of the countryside caused by mines cannot be justified.

While there are programs to assist Colombia's mine victims with rehabilitation and vocational training, they are far from adequate. I have supported efforts to increase U.S. assistance. We are looking at ways to use the Leahy War Victims Fund to assist Colombian civilians who have been injured by mines, and we are supporting United for Colombia's efforts to obtain surgery in the U.S. for Colombian soldiers who have suffered grievous mine injuries.

I have been a consistent critic of human rights violations in Colombia where impunity remains a persistent problem. There have been thousands of killings of civilians, including of human rights defenders, union members, journalists, and others who have been targeted by one armed group or another. Hardly any of these crimes have resulted in convictions and punishment. But none of that excuses the continued use of landmines by the FARC and ELN. As I have said many times before, the use of landmines should be a war crime. It is barbaric; it is inhumane; it is indefensible.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION AGAINST IMPUNITY IN GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week, I spoke in this Chamber about the current debate underway in Guatemala concerning the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG. In my brief remarks I recalled the 30 years of civil war that caused widespread atrocities against civilians, particularly Guatemala's Mayan population. A substantial majority of those killings and disappearances were perpetrated by Guatemalan security forces.

Since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, most Guatemalans have tried to put the past behind them and rebuild their country. The United States and other donors have supported that effort.

But key aspects of the Peace Accords remain unfulfilled, and there has been no justice for the families of the war's many victims. Meanwhile, gang violence, drug trafficking, brutal killings of women, and attacks against human rights defenders and others who speak out against corruption and impunity have increased exponentially and threaten the very foundations of Guatemala's fragile democracy.

In recent years, the Guatemalan Government has worked with officials of the United Nations to draft the CICIG agreement, the latest version of which has been upheld by Guatemala's constitutional court.

The CICIG is necessary to expose the truth about clandestine groups and to bring accountability for the violence. Far from weakening national sovereignty, CICIG will support Guatemala by helping to strengthen the capacity of the country's dysfunctional judicial system.

On July 18, a majority of members of the International Relations Committee of the Guatemalan Congress, for reasons that only they can explain, voted against the CICIG agreement. Since then, several have changed their votes and I understand that on August 1 the full Congress will approve or reject the CICIG agreement or refer it to another committee.

The question of whether to approve CICIG is, of course, a decision solely for Guatemala's Congress to make. But the importance of this historic decision cannot be overstated for U.S.-Guatemalan relations and for Guatemala's future.

Guatemala, like many impoverished countries emerging from years of civil conflict, faces immense social, economic and political challenges. Without the support of countries like the United States in building its economy, promoting foreign investment and trade, and strengthening the institutions of democracy, Guatemala will lag behind its neighbors.

Today, that support hangs in the balance.

The Bush administration has voiced strong support for CICIG. The U.S. Congress has linked a resumption of U.S. assistance for the Guatemalan Armed Forces, in part, on approval of CICIG. In addition, I would be reluctant to support assistance for Guatemala to take part in any regional security initiative with the United States, unless CICIG is approved and supported. There is little point in trying to work with a government that fails to demonstrate a strong commitment to ending impunity and to combating gang violence and corruption, which have infiltrated the very institutions that would participate in such a strategy.

CICIG is nothing less than a choice between the past and the future. Rejecting this historic initiative an outcome most Americans would find inexplicable would signal that the Guatemalan Congress is more interested in protecting the forces of evil, and in covering up the truth, than in ending the lawlessness that is taking Guatemala backwards.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN COLOMBIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, at a time when we are focused on the chaos in Iraq and the flood of Iraqis who have fled their homes and are living either as displaced persons in Iraq or as refugees in Jordan, Syria and elsewhere, I want to call attention to a humanitarian crisis in our own hemisphere.

In Colombia, a country of roughly 44 million people, over 3 million have